

FAQs - Response to Parent Questions

The Rationale for Change

- **Why was Bellwood chosen as the site for Ivydale, rather than Inverton?**

School leaders, Governors and the Local Authority worked together to take this decision. A building analysis was undertaken to compare the suitability of the 2 sites, which concluded that the Bellwood site is more suitable for a 2 form entry primary school. It provides larger internal and external areas, offering flexibility for classroom space, play areas and outdoor learning for all age groups. There has been a successful 2 form entry school on this site for over a hundred years.

Area Comparison of Ivydale Primary School Sites

<i>Site</i>	<i>Total Area</i>
Bellwood	3150 sq. m
Inverton	2437 sq. m

- **What will happen to the Inverton building?**

The Inverton building has to remain as a space for education. It is planned to become a primary SEND special school. There will be a consultation on this in early 2025 once details are confirmed. In addition, planning applications will need to be submitted for any significant changes to buildings at both sites and local residents will be able to comment on this. The Inverton building is owned by Southwark Council, who will determine its future.

- **How are works going to be funded?**

The council is committed to significant investment in the Bellwood site, for the major building and refurbishment works. The final amount will be confirmed once architects and other professional services have developed detailed, fully costed plans. The school will utilise capital funds to ensure technology in classrooms and furniture is of a high standard. The school will also be seeking support from ILOF to fund key projects as we develop our exciting new specialist spaces, such as the computing and technology room.

- **Will existing pupils lose their space?**

No, all existing pupil places are secure and they will continue to be educated at Ivydale.

- **Will siblings still have priority?**

Yes, while we are consulting to change our admissions policy with a PAN (Published Admissions Number) reduction from 90 to 60 children, the oversubscription criteria will remain the same, with siblings having a high priority.

- **Will local children still be able to secure a reception place at Ivydale?**

The number of pupils taking up a school place in the Reception Year has fallen from 87 in 2019 to 62 in 2024, a 29% reduction. This year, parents of 54 children selected Ivydale as their first preference school. If this pattern continues, all local children who wish to attend Ivydale, will be able to.

- **How will this move solve the school's financial challenges?**

Schools are funded on the basis of actual numbers of children attending rather than the number of places they have. A school with a PAN of 90 must plan on the basis that it might need to provide 3 classes per year rather than 2 even if the actual numbers are nowhere near 90. This creates uncertainty, makes it difficult to plan and has a significant impact on finances. A PAN reduction to 60 (2 form entry) to reflect actual numbers enables the school to plan and manage its budget effectively.

The operational costs of running 2 buildings (utilities, staffing, kitchens, premises team, cleaning etc.) have put a significant financial strain on the school without the pupil numbers to match.

Working with Governors and the Local Authority, the school is operating a Deficit Recovery Plan, which anticipates eradicating the deficit within 3 years as a result of this project, assuming the project keeps to the planned timescale.

Our Vision

- **What are the priorities for the Bellwood site?**

These include:

- Relocating the kitchen to the ground floor
- Nursery relocating to the former Children's Centre Building
- Relocating Reception classes (to current nursery) to create space for the kitchen
- Moving Year 1 to the ground floor
- Upgrading heating and lighting to increase efficiency and sustainability
- Installing a new lift to improve access
- Improve acoustics to all classrooms
- Refurbishment of all classrooms
- Creating new specialist learning spaces (computing and technology rooms)

- **What are the plans for the new specialist spaces at Bellwood?**

We will retain all the existing specialist spaces at Bellwood such as the library, music rooms and sensory room. In addition to this, we are planning to have a brand new computer room, and a DT/food technology space. All spaces on the Bellwood school will be used by the school, including the attic space, which has not been used for some time.

The school keeper's house is not within the scope of this project. The council is reviewing the use of former school keepers' houses across the borough.

- **How will playtimes and mealtimes be managed with Reception through to Year 6 in one building?**

The school ran very smoothly as a 2 form entry school before the expansion in 2017. We will continue to provide staggered break and lunch times so that different age groups access the playgrounds and lunch hall at different times. The playground areas will be allocated to different age ranges, so Nursery and Reception will continue to have their own dedicated space and Year 1-2 will be in a separate part of the playground to the older children. The school is committed to continuing our award winning approach to outdoor play through the OPAL project.

- **How will classes be organised?**

Most of our year groups are currently arranged into 2 classes and will remain so. Our Year 3 cohort is currently in 3 classes and unless numbers reduce dramatically, they are likely to remain so as they move through the school. Current Reception is in 3 classes but we will be consolidating them into 2 classes as the numbers now reflect this. Nursery size will remain the same.

Following our PAN consultation, it is expected that all future year groups will be in 2 classes. The maximum class size for infant classes (Reception to Y2) is 30 pupils per class with a single teacher. If a class has more than one teacher, the class can have more than 30 pupils, as long as each teacher has no more than 30 pupils.

- **How will PE and clubs be affected?**

We will continue to offer a broad and balanced menu of clubs that is the envy of many local schools. We will maximise spaces available to ensure we are able to offer as many clubs as possible. During building works, we will make effective use of the Inverton spaces to ensure clubs can continue.

Bellwood has three usable halls for PE and the outdoor area. We are looking at other local partners to provide further outdoor PE spaces.

- **What will be the impact on traffic in the local area?**

We have a Travel Plan, which will be reviewed as part of this project. We have requested that bike and scooter storage at Bellwood be considered as part of the plan.

Managing the Project

- **Who will manage the works?**

Southwark is responsible for the project and the school will manage the day-to-day operation of the school to minimise disruption to children's learning, in order to maintain continuity of provision.

- **How long will the project take and what if it is delayed?**

Initial professional advice is that September 2026 is a realistic, if ambitious timetable to complete the refurbishment of the Bellwood site. However, September 2026 is not a hard deadline for the council and if a longer period is essential, the timetable will be extended. A key priority will be to minimise the impact of any building work on the children's learning. The school will continue to operate across both sites during the works and we will not be required to move out of the Inverton site until refurbishment of Bellwood is complete.

Plans are currently being drawn up and we will share them with the wider community when we are able to.

- **How will disruption be minimised?**

The timetable and final programme of works is yet to be confirmed. We are working closely with the local authority to determine the phasing of works and the implications of this for the school.

Southwark have committed to doing the bulk of noisy and dirty works outside of term time. As we will retain Inverton, we will be able to be flexible and move learning here if necessary during the project. However, we will aim to minimise this for children and staff. In September 2025, we anticipate that Y4-Y6 will be at Inverton, but there is capacity for further year groups to be there if needed.

- **Will the asbestos at Bellwood be removed?**

Southwark will be arranging the relevant surveys and will deal accordingly with the asbestos. Any work would only happen in the holiday time.

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Head of School

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